DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 309 869 PS 018 212

TITLE	School-Age Program Quality Review Instrument.
INSTITUTION	California State Dept. of Education, Sacramento.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-8011-0766-0
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	22p.; Prepared by the Childhood Development Division.
AVAILABLE FROM	Bureau of Publications Sales, California State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802-0271 ($2.00; California residents must add sales tax).
PUB TYPE	Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Early Childhood Education; *Educational Assessment; *Educational Quality; Elementary Education; *Measurement Techniques; *School Age Day Care; State Programs
IDENTIFIERS	*California

ABSTRACT

The School-Age Child Care Program Quality Review Instrument is a compilation of standards designed to measure the quality of a state-funded, center-based child care program for school-age children. These standards were established in compliance with the requirements specified in Sections 8208 and 8463 of California's Education Code. The instrument assesses through observation, documentation, and interviews, the following seven program components: (1) philosophy, goals, and objectives; (2) administration; (3) children's needs, interests, and skills; (4) developmental programming; (5) parent involvement and education; (6) community resources and social services; and (7) program evaluation. The administration component includes three indicators: program management, personnel policies, and staff development. The developmental component contains seven indicators: program documentation, program activities, multicultural curriculum, special needs, personal interactions, materials and equipment, and space management. Depending on the score received, programs are rated excellent, good, adequate, or inadequate. Inadequate programs are required to submit a program improvement plan within 30 calender days of the program quality review. Cross references to Senate Bill 303 and a glossary of terms are appended. (RH)

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School-Age Program Quality Review Instrument

Prepared by the
Child Development Division

PS 018212

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PREFACE

Senate Bill 863 (1980) and Senate Bill 303 (1985) mandated the California State Department of Education to develop standards for the implementation of cost-effective, high-quality, extended day care programs. This document contains the standards to be used in measuring the quality of extended day care programs funded by the Child Development Division of the State Department of Education. The terms "standard of quality" and "indicator of quality" are used interchangeably.

This document is based on the philosophy that (1) children have unique needs and that programs funded to deliver child development services must aim to satisfy those identified needs and skill levels; (2) child development staff of local agencies must conduct the program with the understanding that children grow by passing from one stage of development to another; and (3) knowing how children grow and develop is essential in planning and implementing a high-quality child care program because staff can plan activities which are developmentally appropriate.

School-age children are more advanced developmentally and require different settings and programs than those settings and programs for younger children enrolled in preschool-age programs. In addition, school-age children often experience modern-day stresses, such as family structure changes, peer pressures, and increased academic requirements which could lead to problems unless the children receive adequate care, guidance, and supervision before and after school. Child care professionals must use this understanding of the special needs of school-age children as they plan their extended day care programs.

It is an illusory, and sometimes even harmful, aim to treat each child alike. What is needed is a tailor-made approach fashioned to suit each child. Only by allowing for individual differences can child developmentalists ensure an appropriate environment for each child in a given group of children. In this way, too, program staff avoid a temptation to develop children in their own image and so avoid disappointment for themselves and a sense of inadequacy in children. The wide range of ages and developmental levels of school-age children enrolled in the program require that program activities be planned to meet the different needs and skill levels of all the children.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This instrument was developed through a joint effort by field representatives in the School-Age Community Child Care Program (SACCCP) and consultants in the Child Development Division. Special acknowledgement is given to the California School Age Consortium for its contributions to the completion of this document.

The School-Age Community Child Care Program Quality Review Committee consisted of: Nancy Claxton, Orange County Superintendent of Schools Office; Sharon Junge, Cooperative Extension, University of California, Placer County 4-H; Lisa Lajala, Albany YMCA; David Martin, City of Pacifica Parks and Recreation; Mary Rich, Clovis Unified School District; and Charlene Smith, San Juan Unified School District. Participating Child Development Division staff were Gaspar Garcia, Carolyn Minor, Don Sato, and Barbara Tardif. Special recognition goes to Kay Witcher, Administrator, Field Services, Region III, for coordinating development of the instrument.

OVERVIEW

Both general child development programs and the School-Age Community Child Care Program (SACCCP) provide child care for school age children which supports working parents, the home, and the child's regular school. SACCCP services are available to both state subsidized and nonsubsidized children, with the intent of providing a balance between the two groups. Children from varying cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds, including those with special needs, are served before and after school and during vacation periods. These programs will utilize community resources to improve their services to families and will be fully accessible to the local communities.

A variety of educational, recreational, and other enrichment activities are provided to meet the varying needs of school-age children. Children will have opportunities to develop to their fullest capabilities and benefit from a wide range of activities supervised by well-trained and responsive staff. Ideally, ongoing communication will be maintained between the regular school program and the school age program. Parent education will be part of the program services.

These services are delivered in a variety of settings, such as school sites, child care centers, and recreation facilities. Various types of organizations, including public and private agencies, administer the programs. These programs coordinate with, or provide opportunities for, club work, organized athletics, and other activities not otherwise available to the children. Each setting should be a healthy and safe environment for children.

PROGRAM QUALITY REVIEW PROCESS

The Child Development Division Program Quality Reviews (PQRs) are conducted at state-subsidized child care programs. The reviews are conducted with instruments specially designed for each type of program. This instrument is intended for use by programs serving school-age children.

The program quality review is conducted by CDD staff over a period of one day. Usually, the review will occur at only one site within the agency. The PQR procedure includes pre-planning the review team's schedule with the agency. Interviews, observations, and a review of materials are used in the procedures in the PQR process. During the interview process, the program director, site supervisors (if more than one site), teachers, aides, and support staff will be interviewed in small groups. Parents may be interviewed depending on their schedules.

The team utilizes a rating form to record the performance of the program in meeting the program quality standards. The quality of the program is measured by the degree to which it meets the requirements of each program component. The team uses observation techniques, interviews, and a review of pertinent documentation to verify these requirements. The results of the review are shared with interested individuals at the "Exit Interview" held at the end of the day. If any expectations are out of compliance, the agency must provide a corrective plan to the Child Development Division within 30 days.

In summary, the Program Quality Review process is undertaken to determine, improve, and sustain the quality of CDD-funded programs serving school-age children. If a program is rated inadequate, the program must work to improve. Though the PQR instrument was developed primarily to rate quality, it also can be used effectively as a tool for self-review and self-improvement. Ultimately, meaningful changes should emerge as a result of this evaluation process.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

The School-Age Child Care Program Quality Review Instrument is a compilation of standards designed to measure the quality of a state-funded, center-based child care program serving school-age children. These standards are established in compliance with the requirements specified in Education Code Sections 8208 and 8463.

This instrument is used to assess the following seven (1-7) program components: philosophy, goals, and objectives; administration; assessment of children's needs, interests, and skills; developmental program; parent involvement and education; community resources and social services; and program evaluation. Under the administration program component are three indicators: program management; personnel policies; and staff development. Under the developmental program component are seven indicators: program documentation; program activities; multicultural curriculum; special needs; personal interactions; materials and equipment; and space management.

RATING

Each program component is given a certain number of points. The total number of points for the seven components is 100. Programs are assessed according to the indicators and items subsumed under the components. When the points earned by the program are totaled, the program is rated as Excellent, Good, Adequate, or Inadequate. Programs reflecting a program rating of Inadequate are required to submit to the CDD a program improvement plan which will bring their rating into the adequate range at least. Assistance may be provided by the consultant in selecting the areas which need additional work. The program improvement plan must be submitted within thirty (30) calendar days of the program quality review. Programs scoring in the Adequate or higher ranges will be encouraged to select areas of the program which need further improvement.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

A. Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives

The program philosophy must be based on an understanding of the developmental needs of school-age children. This philosophy is used to formulate clear program goals and objectives.

Documentation

1.1 Governing body or board designee approves the philosophy, goals, and objectives annually.

1.2 Goals and objectives are appropriate for the school-age child care program.

1.3 Agency has a written plan to achieve the program goals which includes designation of individuals to implement the plan.

Documentation/Interview

1.4 The administrative and instructional staff have reviewed the agency's philosophy, goals, and objectives.

Interview

1.5 Goals and objectives can be articulated by the program director and professional staff.

B. Administration

Administration includes three aspects: program management; personnel policies; and staff development. When planning for these aspects of administration, the agency must consider the unique characteristics of school-age programs.

1. Program Management

The act of managing a school age child care program involves coordinating activities which take place in a variety of settings. Program management of school-age programs requires accommodating school staff who may be part-time or working on an hourly basis only when the school age program is in session.

Documentation/Interview

1.1 Agency conducts staff meetings on a regular basis and provides other opportunities to foster positive communication.

Observation/Documentation

1.2 Agency provides a nutrition program which shall include snacks and may include breakfast and lunch.

Observation

1.3 Subsidized and nonsubsidized children receive equivalent services.

1.4 Agency has a plan for moving children to and from school or from program to program in a safe and orderly manner.

2. Personnel Policies

The success of the program is ultimately achieved through the cooperative efforts of the administrative and instructional staff. The administration must formulate and clarify policies and procedures that facilitate the work of the instructional staff.

Documentation

2.1 Agency makes an effort to recruit qualified staff by advertising and announcing the positions through various sources and media.

2.2 Agency makes an effort to achieve an intergenerational staffing pattern.

2.3 A written employee performance evaluation to which the employee is given the opportunity to respond in writing is completed according to approved personnel policies.

3. Staff Development

A well-prepared staff is essential for the success of a program. Staff need to be familiar with agency policies, expectations, and the curriculum. Well-planned on-the-job training should be provided for employees on a regular basis and be designed to help the staff meet the needs of school age children. However, this staff development training will need to be provided in a variety of creative ways, since staff often are not available during non-school hours.

Documentation/Interview

3.1 Agency has an orientation plan for new employees, substitutes, and volunteers.

3.2 Each member of the staff has a clear understanding of his/her role and responsibilities.

Documentation

3.3 Agency has a staff development plan which provides opportunities for professional growth and career advancement for its employees.

Interview

3.4 Employees are allowed to establish goals for self-improvement based on their job evaluations.

3.5 Agency assists employees in meeting their self-improvement goals.

C. Assessment of Children's Needs, Interests, and Skills

Each child receives an informal or formal assessment of his/her needs, interests, and skills upon entering the program. Ongoing assessment of a child's needs and interests continue throughout the year since these needs may change. For a young child, the parents are asked to provide necessary information about the child. But for an older school age child, the assessment may be completed with the help of the youngster.

Documentation

1.1 At enrollment, information is obtained from parent(s) regarding family background, dominant language, and special needs. This information is reviewed at least annually and updated if necessary.

1.2 At enrollment, or shortly thereafter, the needs, interests, and hobbies of the parents and the child are assessed by the director or other professional staff.

Interview

1.3 An effort is made to promote articulation between the school and the school-age child care program regarding children's progress.

D. Developmental Program

The developmental program includes: program documentation; program activities; multicultural curriculum; special needs; personal interactions; materials and equipment; and space management. Each of these aspects of the developmental program requires careful planning and implementation based on appropriate goals and objectives.

1. Program Documentation

The program is planned and based on well-defined, written goals and objectives and the assessed needs and interests of the children. Such documentation should reflect planned activities that implement those goals and objectives.

Observation

1.1 Daily program schedule is posted for the benefit of staff, parents, and children.

1.2 Written activity plans are based on program goals and objectives.

1.3 Activity plans allow for flexibility to meet the spontaneous interests of the children.

Documentation

1.4 Activity plans are written for each day in which the program is in operation.

1.5 Activity plans address the assessed needs and interests of the group of children being served.

2. Program Activities

Since the age range and skill levels of the children within a school-age child care program may be broad, the curriculum should be planned to accommodate various developmental levels. Ideally, opportunities are available for children to participate regularly in process-oriented activities that allow for exploration as well as activities that focus on the end product.

Observation

2.1 Children are allowed to make developmentally appropriate choices within the structure of the agency's program goals.

Documentation/Observation

2.2 Children are given opportunities to build their skills in educational and/or recreational and leisure time activities.

2.3 Activities occur on an individual basis and in small and large-group settings.

2.4 Children are engaged in activities which are appropriate for their particular age group and skill level.

2.5 Program offers a wide variety of choices in any or all of the areas of fine arts, practical arts, and athletics.

2.6 Staff plans activities to meet the unique needs of children.

3. Multicultural Curriculum

California has a rich diversity of cultures which contribute to the uniqueness of American society. For this reason, the cultural differences and similarities which exist among individuals and groups need to be recognized and incorporated into the program.

Interview

3.1 Agency makes strong effort to achieve a multiethnic staffing pattern.

3.2 Learning opportunities focus on the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children in the program as well as other groups.

Documentation

3.3 Information and materials regarding the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the children in the program and their community are available and are utilized by the staff and children.

3.4 Multicultural activities are integrated into all aspects of the program.

Documentation/Interview/Observation

3.5 Staf provides multicultural activities based on respect and sensitivity toward all people.

4. Special Needs

The special needs of children are identified when a child is enrolled. An open-door policy is formulated for enrolling children with special needs, and appropriate referrals are made for those children who cannot be accommodated. Special needs children are identified as those children who are handicapped, abused or at risk of abuse, or with a language other than English for whom the agency claims additional reimbursement.

Documentation

4.1 Children with special needs are identified at the time of enrollment.

4.2 There is an ongoing process to identify children's special needs.

4.3 The staff and agency are attempting to meet the special needs of children.

4.4 Agency provides extra services or materials for children identified as special needs children.

4.5 The staff is trained to work with children with special needs.

4.6 Families are referred to social service agencies for assistance as appropriate.

5. Personal Interactions

Positive interactions among adults and children are based on clearly defined rules and expectations. These rules and expectations should be developed with input from parents and students, when appropriate. The adults must model acceptable behaviors that the children can emulate. Such acceptable behaviors need to be positive and nurturing for the adults as well as the children in the program. Respect and appreciation for differences among people must be fostered.

Observation

5.1 Reasonable and age appropriate rules governing student behavior are posted in an area which is visible to the children.

5.2 The rules, based on limits and consequences, are consistently applied by the staff and volunteers.

5.3 Instructional staff and other adults who are assigned to the program spend most of their time directly involved with children.

5.4 Adults utilize positive communication techniques which enhance a positive self-concept in children and adults in the program.

5.5 Staff intervenes to stop activities which are rude or discriminatory toward other individual children or groups of people.

Documentation/Observation

5.6 Children are made aware of social expectations and social skills.

6. Materials and Equipment

There should be sufficient materials and equipment in the classroom so that all children can be occupied in activities at the same time. Many of the available program materials should have multiple functions and be used for a variety of different activities.

Observation

6.1 Materials and equipment are appropriate and safe for school age children.

6.2 Quantity and variety of materials and equipment available are sufficient for the size of program.

6.3 Staff utilizes the materials and equipment effectively with the children.

7. Space Management

A well-planned physical environment will have a positive effect upon the behavior of children. Therefore, indoor and outdoor space should be utilized appropriately and structured to maximize the children's potential. However, while conducting the Program Quality Review, reviewers must consider the constraints imposed upon shared environments and determine how this shared space is being used innovatively.

Observation

7.1 Agency and its staff maintain a safe and healthy environment for children.

7.2 Activity areas are appropriately identified as quiet, work, or game areas.

7.3 Space is arranged to facilitate the movement of children from one area to another.

7.4 Space is arranged to facilitate supervision.

7.5 There is an identified place for each child to store his or her personal belongings.

Interview

7.6 If space is shared with another program(s), a mutually acceptable agreement has been reached for sharing the space.

E. Parent Involvement and Education

Parents can improve the quality of a school age program. To be effective, the program must involve parents in a variety of ways and provide parent education activities. At the same time, the staff must recognize that the parents are working and are required to also maintain communication with the child's regular day school program.

Documentation

1.1 Parents have opportunities to visit the program.

1.2 There is a variety of ways for parents to become involved in supporting the program.

Documentation/Interview

1.3 Staff is available to meet with parents upon request and maintains ongoing communication.

1.4 Parents are apprised of policies, procedures, and rules and regulations which are applicable to the SACCC program.

1.5 Rules governing student behavior and termination procedures are included in written materials to parents.

Interview

1.6 The program provides parents with suggested educational activities to help their children succeed in the school program.

F. Community Resources and Social Services

The school-age child care program needs to be located in a place that is easily accessible to the community. The program should utilize the available services and resources of the community and encourage community agencies to provide such support. The extra support services will be particularly useful when serving children with special needs.

Documentation/Interview

1.1 Agency helps the community become aware of the school-age child care program.

Documentation

1.2 Agency invites the community to provide or contribute special resources to the program.

1.3 Agency utilizes resources which are available in the community.

Interview

1.4 Agency coordinates activities with community youth organizations, such as the scouts, 4-H clubs, athletic leagues, and the Y's.

G. Program Evaluation

An evaluation plan that includes an ongoing and year-end evaluation process is used to determine whether or not the program goals and objectives are being met. This plan should be the basis for evaluating the quality level of the program.

Documentation/Interview

1.1 Administrative staff review all aspects of the program annually to determine if the needs of the parents and community are being met.

1.2 Director and instructional staff regularly review the program to determine if the program is meeting the specific needs of the children.

1.3 Regular input from parents and children is included in the program evaluation process.

Interview

1.4 Results of the evaluation are used to modify the program, if necessary.

APPENDIX

CROSS REFERENCES TO SENATE BILL 303 (CHAPTER 1026, STATUTES OF 1985)

EDUCATION CODE SECTION 8463

Suggested Indicators of Quality in SB 303, Chap. 1026/85	Cross Reference to PQR Instrument
(a) A physical environment that is safe and appropriate to the ages of the children and which meets applicable licensing standards as defined in Section 8480.	(a) Space Management
(b) Transportation or supervision to and from the school to the extended day care facility when the facility is not on the school site.	(b) Administration, Management
(c) A diverse school-age child population from varying socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.	(c) Multicultural Curriculum
(d) Extensive use of community resources appropriate to school-age children, including those community resources with a cultural, recreational, or educational emphasis.	(d) Community Resources
(e) Program activities that are age-appropriate and meet the developmental needs of each child, including, but not limited to, academic, creative arts, and support service activities and activities for social, emotional, cognitive, linguistic, and physical development.	(e) Program Activities, Materials and Equipment, Personal Interactions

(f)	Program activities and services that meet the cultural, linguistic, and other special needs of children and families served.	(f) Multicultural Curriculum, Special Needs
(g)	Programs that support the academic growth of the children served, such as tutoring, homework assistance, and reinforcement of basic skills.	(g) Program Activities
(h)	Programs that encourage children to participate in organized and supervised youth groups.	(h) Community Resources
(i)	Family and community involvement.	(i) Parent Involvement and Education, Community Resources
(j)	Parent education in specific strategies to help their children succeed in their academic programs.	(j) Parent Involvement and Education
(k)	Efficient and effective local program administration.	(k) Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives; Administration Program Management; Personnel Policies; Program Evaluation
(l)	Staff that possesses the appropriate and required qualifications or experience, or both, as required in Education Code Section 8360. Extended day care instructional staff may be selected from persons qualifying under Section 8360 or state licensing regulations for school-age child day care centers. The appropriate staff qualifications shall reflect the diverse linguistic and cultural makeup of the children and families in the extended day care program. The use of intergenerational staff shall be encouraged.	(l) Staff Development, Administration, Personnel Policies, Multicultural Curriculum

(m)	Provision for nutritional needs of children. The Superintendent of Public Instruction may exempt agencies providing extended day care services pursuant to this article from the requirements of Section 8204.	(m) Administration, Program Management
(n)	Provision of, or referral to, support services that include, but are not limited to, identification of child and family needs.	(n) Special Needs, Assessment of Child's Needs

GLOSSARY

ACTIVITY: A specific short-term function leading to the achievement of a related objective for children, parents, staff, or community.

ACTIVITY PLAN: A written plan of daily activities provided for children that is based on their identified needs.

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE ACTIVITY: A learning experience or behavior that positively reinforces a child's self-concept and demeans neither his or her culture or origin nor the culture or origin of other children.

DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE ACTIVITY: An activity that is consistent with what can be expected of children at given developmental stages.

EVALUATION: A standardized process by which an activity, plan, procedure, or policy is reviewed and judged in accordance with predetermined criteria.

EXTENDED DAY CARE: Before and after school child care, provided for school-age children. Services are also provided during school vacation days.

GOAL: A statement of purpose or aim for future accomplishments.

ITEM: A specification of requirements for a program component used to measure compliance with quality standards.

MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITY: An experience which fosters the knowledge of and apporeciation for the traditions, customs, and history of various cultures represented in the community, nation, and world.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT: A standardized or informal data collection process designed to solicit and identify specific predetermined information.

NONSUBSIDIZED CARE: Child care that is funded in part or in full by the parent and/or entities other than the State Department of Education.

OBJECTIVE: A specific course of action or activity described in measurable terms for the purpose of attaining a related goal.

POLICY: A board-approved statement which governs the agency's activities and is not in conflict with state regulations.

PROGRAM COMPONENT: A specific area of the program based on requirements which are relevant to that area.

PROGRAM QUALITY REVIEW INSTRUMENT: A compilation of components, indicators, and items used to measure the quality of state-funded child care programs.

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN: The children enrolled in school who are in kindergarten through grade nine.

SCHOOL-AGE COMMUNITY CHILD CARE PROGRAM: An extended day care program funded pursuant to provisions of Education Code 8468.5 as found in Chapter 1026/85.

SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN: The unique needs of children who are identified as handicapped, abused or at risk of abuse, or with a language other than English for whom the agency claims additional reimbursement.

SUBSIDIZED CARE: Child care funded in part or in full by the state.

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